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EIGHTY-NINTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
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WASHINGTON -- A quarter of a billion dollars a year in savings to the government can be realized under a proposal by Southeast Texas Congressman Jack Brooks (D-Texas) to coordinate government acquisition and use of automatic data processing (ADP) equipment, a House efficiency subcommittee was told Tuesday.

The bill, H. R. 4845, was endorsed by a number of witnesses who appeared before the House Government Activities Subcommittee.

Joseph Campbell, the Comptroller General of the United States, told the subcommittee, "...the Government will continue to incur substantial amounts of unnecessary costs until more effective centralized management and control" of computers, a "high cost area of government operations," are achieved.

The General Accounting Office, which Campbell heads, has conducted studies of automatic data processing equipment used by the federal government and the estimated savings are based on these studies.

Lawson B. Knott, Jr., Acting Administrator of General Services, told the subcommittee, "...there is a clear need for the enactment of legislation which would assist in improving the acquisition and utilization of ADP equipment in the Government."

Knott continued:

"...The use of automatic data processing equipment in government has grown phenomenally during the past 13 years. In 1954, there were only 10 computers in use by the federal government. By the end of 1964, the usage had increased to 1,767. The current estimate is that there will be 2,150 computers in federal use by the end of fiscal year 1966. In 1964, federal agencies spent $1.1 billion for the purchase, rental and operation of data processing equipment for all types of use by 2,068 organizational units within 44 federal agencies. Current estimates indicate that on a nationwide basis by 1970, the number of computer systems and annual costs in connection therewith will triple."

In outlining the bill's provisions, Brooks, who is chairman of the subcommittee, said that at present "each agency operates independently in the acquisition and utilization of ADP equipment with only Bureau of the Budget guidelines to follow."

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But, he said, furnishing the agencies with guidelines "has not, in turn, provided the Bureau of the Budget with the data necessary to determine agency compliance with existing policies." He added, "Nor does the bureau have information sufficient to recognize new problems as they arise or to establish new policies as they are needed."

The bill would set up a revolving fund for use in acquisition of ADP equipment as needed and in setting up equipment sharing pools and computer service centers. Each agency would determine its own ADP needs and the use made of the equipment. The Administrator of General Services would act as coordinator for government acquisition and use of ADP equipment. Along with the revolving fund, the General Services Administration would maintain a continuous inventory of ADP equipment in use by the government and government contractors.

Equipment used only part of the time by one agency or contractor might well be operated the rest of the time by another user. And when an agency or contractor is finished with a computer, a check would be made to see if any other government function could use the equipment rather than purchasing a new computer.

"With a minimum of $12 million wasted each month implementation of this legislation is delayed -- and I believe this to be an extremely conservative figure -- prompt action must be taken on H. R. 4845," Congressman Brooks said.

The Congressman introduced similar legislation two years ago which was approved by the House of Representatives but the Senate did not act before the Congress ended.

Others scheduled to appear at the hearings were Elmer B. Staats, Deputy Director of the Bureau of the Budget; Edmond C. Buckley, Director, Office of Tracking and Data Acquisition, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; John P. Abadessa, Controller, Atomic Energy Commission; and Dr. William Eaton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science and Technology, Department of Commerce.

The members of the Subcommittee are Congressman William S. Moorhead (D-Pa.), David S. King (D-Utah), Dante B. Fascell (D-Fla.), Ogden R. Reid (R-N.Y.), and Edward J. Gurney (R-Fla.).

The Subcommittee is part of the House Government Operations Committee, which is headed by Congressman William L. Dawson (D-Ill.).

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